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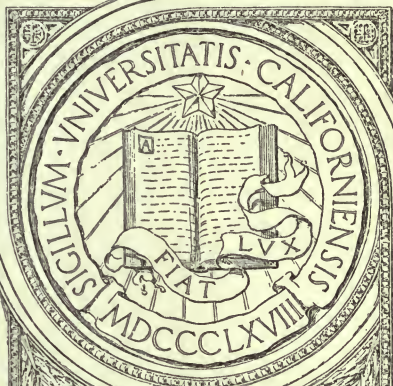
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1877

EUGENE

A TOWN


SECTION OF SPANISH

IN CALIFORNIA

BY J. W. GIBSON

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by J. W. Gibson

JOHN S. ...
Civil & Mechanical Engineer
San Francisco, Cal.



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EUGENE:

A POEM

IN THE

MEASURE OF SPENSER.

IN TWO CANTOS.

BY CHARLES GRATE.

PHILADELPHIA:
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1842.

JOHN S. PRELL
Civil & Mechanical Engineer.
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

ENTERED according to the act of Congress, in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-two, by

CHARLES GRATE,

in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

JOHN S. WELLS
Civil & Mechanical Engineer
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

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Prell

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EUGENE.

CANTO I.

I.

If in the night of these degenerate days,
Thou canst, my muse of Spenser, stoop so low,
I pray thee favour with thy smile my lays.
Disdain not in a soil so mean to sow;
We know not to what length the crop may go:
The choicest fruits on flinty hills are found;
The lilies blossom where the briars grow;
The olives with the richest growth abound
Where an unbroken wilderness extends around.

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II.

There dwelt in Pennsylvania's fertile vale
A youth, who husbanded so well his time,
That, midst his labours at the plough and flail,
He gained distinction in the arts sublime.
When foul besprent with toil's unpleasant slime,
He would, to gratify intense desire,
Peruse by snatches works of loftiest rhyme,
Till he had mastered their contents entire.
Eugene his name, which shall my rising song inspire.

III.

He was the offspring of inglorious sires.
They in their number compassed but a few,
And, under pompous signatures of Squires,
Had never figured in the public view:
What most distinguished them, was that they knew
To till the earth with more than common gain;
Rich were the harvests which they yearly drew;
Their barns were filled with various sorts of grain,
And lofty stacks were seen to deck the naked plain.

IV.

His person was of that imposing make,
Which, whilst it shows a strength in high degree,
Will yet the eye with its perfections take;
A figure tall, yet perfect symmetry;
A countenance ingenuous as the sky;
An eye expressive of a noble mind,
Bright and varying, full of energy;
A step firm, to agility inclined,
At once the sum of grace and dignity combined.

V.

Unlike the youths, accustomed to the field,
He did not throw away his leisure hours,
But treasured them, the greatest fruit to yield,
For the improvement of his mental powers:
And what a store of time, whilst winter lowers,
May not thus fall to enterprising wight,
When day is closely stinted of its dowers,
And, lengthening its dusky reign, the night
Draws on with speed, and shuts all nature from the sight.

VI.

He read with care the works of greatest fame,
Dwelt on their beauties, as they richly threw
A lustre on the gifted author's name:
He passed them through his mind in close review,
And separated from the false the true,
Till, gold and rubbish to the eye laid bare,
He from the process the whole secret drew,
That made them monuments of genius rare,
And caused mankind in admiration fixed to stare.

VII.

'Twas thus that he escaped the fate of those,
Who, dazzled by an author of esteem,
Adore whatever from his pen arose,
Nay, e'en his oversight perfections deem.
Thus what in Milton does incongruous seem,
Some poets, and of no ignoble taste,
Have imitated in their childish dream,
As if those errors which he made through haste,
Were the sublimities on which his fame was based.

VIII.

Thus when, through failure of their mental force,
Some pedants cannot make a piece entire,
They in relief call it Pindaric verse,
And fancy, that amidst their broken lyre,
They have the Theban bard's heroic fire.
Thus all the poets of the present day,
To Byron's rugged numbers still aspire,
Supposing they are in the proper way,
To catch that strength of thought which dignifies his lay.

IX.

However, as all human projects go,
Those master poets too must have their fools;
As tumblers, when performing at a show,
Keep following at their backs their mimic tools,
Who, if they cannot leap across the stools,
Crawl through beneath, and then exclaim aloud,
That they performed the feat e'en by the rules,
To the diversion of the laughing crowd,
Who love the palpable deceit in mirth to shroud.

X.

I here shall to the curious reader show
Some of the authors which Eugene admired.
That Homer's strain, its strong impetuous flow,
His mind exalted, and his bosom fired;
That he found Virgil sweet as he desired;
That Tully's eloquence, and Plato's themes
His breast with ecstasy unfeigned inspired,—
This no peculiar predilection seems:
Who is not worked on by the sun's congenial beams?

XI.

But works in which mankind are not agreed,
By those praised to the skies, cried down by these,
Just as their taste or prejudice may plead,
Of such I here shall the occasion seize,
To show which chiefly could his fancy please.
The stormy Pindar, lowered to this class,
Could his attention draw with most increase;
And none, embodying beauties in a mass,
A greater claim to such a predilection has.

XII.

The bold impetuous movement of his song
Resembles all the fury of a flame,
Which, roaring, rapid, sweeps all things along,
By far too powerful for men to tame.
We know not which shall most our homage claim,
The grandeur that his numbers have acquired,
In their sonorous, wild, irregular game,
Or the enthusiasm with which he was fired,
A spirit more than human—by the muse inspired.

XIII.

Thucydides he held as next in place,
The greatest the historians among.
The candid statements, which in lucid trace
To the relation of his facts belong;
The abrupt rapidity, which all along
Pervades his sentiments in close array;
The figurative expression, bold and strong,
Itself a phrase set out in rich display,—
These made Eugene devote to him the night and day.

XIV.

Let it not seem a want of taste entire,
That Sappho, the unhappy Lesbian dame,
Enchanted him with her bewitching lyre.
The foul aspersions which defile her name,
I neither palliate, nor add to their shame;
Let higher tribunals that case decide;
But criticised in her poetic fame,
She may be looked on as her nation's pride,
Such as it has none other to boast of beside.

XV.

As by superior light the moon outshines
The twinkling stars that decorate the sky,
And in her orb such majesty combines,
That of the train she first attracts the eye,
As ruling empress of the shining fry,
So Sappho, ranked amongst the brilliant fair,
Does all their nice embellishments outvie
By her conceptions of a loftier air,
And stands pre-eminent beyond the least compare.

XVI.

What though of all her works we have received
But a few fragments mutilated dire,
Yet by their excellence it is perceived,
What was the beauty of the piece entire,
What charms it breathed, what poetic fire.
So by the sun's meridian scattered rays,
Which to the day of mortals here conspire,
We calculate the light which he displays
In his collected orb, in his immediate ways.

XVII.

The other ancients, for the present time,
I pass unnoticed with a reference by,
However worthy of the loftiest rhyme,
Convinced that those adduced as a supply,
Will show which way my hero's taste did lie.
I now shall bring the moderns into view:
In turning to their excellence my eye,
Eugene, I find, gave Shakspeare's works their due,
An act of justice which is by the way not new.

XVIII.

Whilst high-bred literati vainly strove
To reach the summit of poetic fame,
Their feeble efforts tending but to prove,
That measured lines, and rhyme's exactest frame
Are far from answering the muse's flame,
Great Shakspeare, with his village learning slight,
And wanting e'en the influence of a name,
Put forth his genius in its native might,
And straight attained Parnassus to its utmost height.

XIX.

Thus whilst the winter nips the verdant scenes,
The rich, despite the price they must bestow,
Supply themselves with artificial greens,
To trim their mantles with a gorgeous show;
But when kind Nature once begins to blow,
The woods themselves turn green in fresh array,
Nay, flowers in the fields spontaneous grow,
Exhale their fragrance where the cattle stray,
Are free to all as grass, and blossom by the way

XX.

His language, flowing with spontaneous grace,
The immediate effect of genius rare;
His imagery, coming in apace
To give description an enlivening air;
His wit, acknowledged as of genuine ware;
His humour, breaking forth at seasons meet,
Which none so inadvertent but must share,—
These, added to his characters discreet,
Whilst on his writings strength confer, preserve them
sweet.

XXI.

Although it is above two hundred years,
Since of the muses he became the son,
And tuned his "woodnotes wild" to British ears,
Yet, with such grandeur are his pieces done,
That not the change the times have undergone,
Nor the improvements in the English tongue,
(Reforms which cut an author to the bone,)
Have one perfection from his beauties wrung.
They are as staple as when they were formerly sung.

XXII

His splendour, founded on the true sublime,
Which in his works as principle obtains,
No more is altered by a change of time,
Than is the sun by earth's unequal reigns:
Though barren heaths and mountainous domains
Do not rejoice beneath his genial ray,
Like cultivated fields and fertile plains,
Yet in the skies he holds his luminous way,
Is glorious to behold, and shines to all the day

XXIII.

That Milton's works were by Eugene admired,
No singularity of taste implies.
Who read them, and was not with rapture fired?
His minor poems were lauded to the skies,
When as an author he began to rise;
But when in 'Paradise Lost,' he showed his mind,
They had no ornaments to take the eyes:
Lost in the splendour which that poem combined,
They fell into oblivion, and no longer shined.

XXIV.

Thus whilst the starry trains adorn the sky,
They, in their sparkling orbits feebly bright,
Disperse the dark, and glimmering light supply;
Draw indistinctly objects to the sight,
The checkered landscape, and the mountain's height;
With gleams reflected on the waters play,
Shine o'er the expanse, and chase the silvery light;
But when the sun comes forth in bright array,
They are eclipsed, and vanish in the blaze of day.

XXV.

Of all the writers who in prose excelled,
He spoke of Addison with warmest praise;
He owned that some to greater splendour swelled;
But then in those unstudied casual rays,
Which genius, in inimitable ways,
Communicates, as by an angel sent,
In those he stood unrivalled in his days;
As Nature's flowers, fragrant to the scent,
Are unapproached by those on which man's art is spent.

XXVI.

Throughout his works, in every page we see
Some apt expressions happily applied;
Not that they dazzle by their novelty,
Or are not generally used beside;
But the facility with which they slide
Into a sentence, to express with ease
The full and the proportioned sense implied,
Gives them the happy faculty to please,
And makes them as original the reader seize.

XXVII.

What yet adds to his fame, and makes it last,
And what to him alone we must confine,
Is that, amidst his beauties unsurpassed,
We see no efforts to excel or shine:
The easy period and melodious line,
Which to his works, as light to day, adhere,
Seem of their first creation to combine;
So natural in their primeval sphere,
So void of show, so of all affectation clear.

XXVIII.

To form a true idea of his style,
Its characteristics not to be described,
Its artless manner, yet glowing all the while,
A handsome woman, by no fashions bribed,
Above all ornaments to dress ascribed,
Her plainness setting off her native grace,
Those manners she from Nature's self imbibed
Her spring of motion, the affection of her face,
May well assist the fancy its deserts to trace.

XXIX.

Thus bent on knowledge, thus with taste endowed,
Was not Eugene with honours circled round?
Did he not rise above the unthinking crowd,
By his importance, and research profound?
Did not his wit and pleasantries abound
In the refined assemblies of the land,
Where passed in jocund laugh the silver sound,
And sweet affection smiled from faces bland,
The whole with delicacy and decorum planned?

XXX.

Alas! afflicted with a deafness sore,
He languished in obscurity unknown,
No prospect of advancement left in store.
In science to a depth unrivalled gone—
He seemed unlettered as the greatest clown;
Of good address—he had a sheepish air;
With beauty favoured—it inglorious shone;
Possessed of eloquence—he could not share
In unpretending talk with expectations fair.

XXXI.

'Twas this affliction, brought by fate's decree,
That proved an obstacle to all his schemes,
Though well concerted they appeared to be.
It put to flight all matrimonial dreams;
It stopped of traffic the perennial streams;
It to his pleasures was a deadly blow;
And a profession, if he went the extremes,
It in the dust at once laid hopeless low:
One instance here adduced will its disaster show.

XXXII.

Urged by a friend, and invitations due,
He once concluded, to his great regret,
To make one of a numerous party too;
Where gentlemen of polished life were met,
And etiquette, the most fastidious yet,
In all its multifarious forms obtained:
What tended further to complete the set,
Was that some ladies, to the fashions trained,
Were present, and the general admiration gained.

XXXIII.

The latter, like the meadows in a scene
By artists mixed to soften nature's sway,
Gave to the company a chastened mien.
Rejoicing in their happiest days of May,
Their beauties opened with a full display.
They were their mothers' ornament and pride;
Though modest, with becoming humour gay;
No thoughts did in their gentle hearts reside,
But such as virtue would not blush to publish wide.

XXXIV.

Eugene in this assembly could appear,
In graceful air, the beauty of the man,
With all the dignity of a compeer;
But when a social intercourse began,
And all joined in a subject as it ran;
Showed by their looks, with cheerfulness attired,
That they were let into the speaker's plan;
Raised sudden laughter when with wit inspired,—
'Twas then that he was done, and by his silence tired.

XXXV.

His friend indeed, to give him all his aid,
Spoke loud, and changed the talk on many a score;
But this, though with a brother's kindness paid,
Supplied no fund for a colloquial store,
Nor to the subject opened him the door:
The little light which he through it received,
Served only to perplex him still the more,
As traveller, when by taper's ray deceived,
It led to swamps beyond the hope of being retrieved.

XXXVI.

Whilst all was life and gayety around,
Eugene, like water stagnant through some stays,
And kept from mingling with the current's bound,
Was a sad contrast by his moody ways,
His countenance bereft of cheerful rays,
His posture through inaction tedious grown;
E'en those around him, deep in social plays,
Could not forbear to make his case their own,
By now and then regarding him with piteous moan.

XXXVII.

Of his infirmity all uninformed,
The ladies wondered, in their girlish freak,
That he no more to courtesy conformed;
One of them, anxious to hear him speak,
Framed an address his intercourse to seek:
She couched it, to conciliate his breast,
In all her silvery tones so soft and meek;
But he, unconscious of his being addressed,
Maintained his silence with composure unsuppressed.

XXXVIII.

The disappointed fair became ashamed,
And coloured in her face as scarlet red:
To vindicate Eugene, unjustly blamed,
His comrade in excuse his deafness plead:
But this to her compassion only led;
For that bewitching charm which beauty flings
Had now forever from her bosom fled:
From admiration, not from pity springs
That all resistless flame with which the lover wrings.

XXXIX.

Eugene, all prospects thus snatched from his view,
Loathed any longer with mankind to dwell,
But hopeless to the wilderness withdrew:
Where rose the mountain with a rugged swell;
Where streams from hanging precipices fell;
Where rocks, on rising rocks grotesquely piled,
Stupendous closed, or left a hollow dell,—
There, from all intercourse of man exiled,
He wandered far sequestered, and the time beguiled.

XL.

In this secluded place he lived retired,
Till finally an institution rose,
Which, yielding the advantage he desired,
Urged him to quit the place of his repose;
It by the name of the Lycéum goes,
An institution, where on theme proposed
The candidates in a discussion close,
Whilst all around, promiscuously composed,
The audience is enlightened by the truth disclosed.

XLI.

The great advantages, to science true,
Which from this institution will arise,
Must strike e'en the most superficial view.
What so contributes to make youth more wise?
Where, from desire to obtain the prize,
Must he the page of history so scan?
Where so discuss a question as it lies?
Where with such niceties his language plan,
Adjust his actions due, and polish all the man?

XLII.

What renders it the more important still,
Affords the disputants a nobler field,
Wakes emulation, and draws forth their skill,
Is that the ladies the discussion gild,
A happy audience on which hopes to build.
What wight, enkindled with a virtuous pride,
Would not from a defeat his question shield,
When she, whom he has destined for his bride,
Is present—sees and hears whatever does betide?

XLIII.

Eugene availed himself, in early time,
Of this Lycéum for which he had prayed.
How he surpassed, in eloquence sublime,
All others that were in the lists arrayed,
Although no mean proficient in the trade,
The muse will now in artless verse unfold;
Not slighting, as to envious spite betrayed,
Those who appeared of less distinguished mould,
But still had midst their rubbish signs of purest gold.

XLIV.

The number of competitors was five:
The first of whom that came upon the stage,
Seemed awkward from his diffidence to strive:
For fear to let his faculties uncage,
He never rose to the pathetic rage;
His voice and actions one same tenor wore,
Like an unvaried country's even page,
Where hills and dales no rugged grandeur tore,
Where cities are not seen, where rivers have no shore.

XLV.

Yet in his composition he displayed
A strength and beauty seldom found combined:
A depth of thought, perspicuously conveyed
In language highly flowing and refined;
An imagery of the noblest kind;
A sparkling wit, which lighted up the whole,
The coruscation of a brilliant mind;
A lively humour, that brooked no control,
But broke forth without ceasing, and cheered up the soul.

XLVI.

The second, with his acquisitions vain,
Availed himself with pleasure of his time.
Although he aimed at a pathetic strain,
Raised high his tone, and with his chest sublime,
Endeavoured as his subject rose to climb,
Yet was there, midst his vehemence and voice,
An inharmonious and monotonous chime;
A cataract of words, a savage noise;
Sounds uttered without art, confounded without choice.

XLVII.

And emphasis, which like relievio shows
The prominence that in expression lies,
Draws forth a dazzling lustre as it glows,
And paints its native colouring to the eyes,
To this it was that he could never rise:
Nor could he, with his accents all uncouth,
Attain inflexion as a golden prize:
With gestures awkward, and with voice unsmooth,
He hurried forward as a bold aspiring youth.

XLVIII.

His style was florid, and through vain parade,
Was more distinguished for a pompous show,
(A tinselled subterfuge adroitly made,)
Than for intrinsic worth contained below:
As in the skies the meteors come and go,
Enduring hardly for a transient view,
E'en so his phrase, with superficial glow,
But for a moment the attention drew,
Then passed away no more the wonder to renew.

XLIX.

In all that vehemence and ardent zeal,
Which unpremeditated speech attend,
When, made the shaft of keen reproach to feel,
The bursts of genius in invective end,
The third now took his station to contend;
His strain irregular, but bold and strong,
Like nature where the scenes in wildness blend;
Rocks heaped together in terrific throng,
Impenetrable forests, rivers rolled along.

L.

The strong conviction, which he deeply felt,
His action's force, the lighting of his eye,
Its ready influence on his language dealt;
Administered, in copious supply,
Expressions that did forcibly apply;
Called in, as true to nature's genial laws,
The aid of images of various dye;
Gave a perspicuous movement to his clause,
A full sonorous flow, as tending to the cause.

LI.

The fourth, commencing with a graceful ease,
Addressed his audience in a studied strain;
The periods varied with design to please;
The diction smooth, familiarly plain;
The arguments, in a connecting chain,
With logical propriety deduced;
The imagery, as a precious gain,
At every chasm in due form adduced;
The whole, in short, to the established rules reduced.

LII.

With all this method and array of art,
He failed to make the impression he desired.
He charmed the ear, but did not move the heart:
Conviction, the important point required,
By which the mind is swayed, the bosom fired,
This, weighed in its results however small,
He in no instance by his talk inspired:
He grasped the shadow, let the substance fall—
Smiles, hearts untouched, responded to the call.

LIII.

Eugene with a majestic air appeared,
And gave his thundering eloquence the reins.
He now in all his natural strength careered,
Uncramped by deafness, his inherent chains;
As when a stream, swollen by a freshet's gains,
Rolls with impetuous force its watery sway,
Involving in its channel all remains,
Which in its lowly ebb had clogged its way,
And carrying them adrift in triumph to the sea.

LIV.

His eyes that flashed the fire of his soul,—
His graceful attitude—his swelling voice,
That rung harmonious music to the whole—
His gestures, made with gracefulness and choice,
As supplements to the ingenious noise,—
These, in addition to his beauteous form,
(Which in itself too oft the heart decoys)
O'erwhelmed his audience with a secret charm,
'Gainst which it struggled all in vain itself to arm.

LV.

His language gave his thoughts a glorious show,
E'en like the sun when he arrays the sky,
And streams reflect the brilliant beams below.
How splendidly his diction dazzled by!
What strength was in his phrase, what energy—
The true sublime, the Ciceronian swell!
How his imagination soared on high,
And revelled where the grandest sceneries dwell,
The thunder's hollow roar, the lightning's flashing spell!

LVI.

The effects of this discourse, we may suppose,
Were such as seemed to magic arts akin.
Expressions of applause, in order close,
When seeming to subside, did just begin;
As when the thunder, almost spent within,
With a diminished noise in heaven rolls,
Not to abate in its terrific din,
But only to procure some hotter doles,
And shake with tenfold violence the trembling poles.

LVII.

Eugene, thus raised at once to highest fame,
Was almost worshipped by the admiring throng.
Cards everywhere in richest gildings came,
All proffering their invitations strong.
The populace, borne by the cry along,
Expressed their homage in the bluntest way:
Some placed him their relationship among;
Some gloried that his looks did theirs betray;
Some knew the time they wrought with him on many a
day.

CANTO II.

I.

IN humble strains, we hitherto have seen,
How in the liberal arts Eugene excelled;
How, spite of all the obstacles between,
He finally his way to triumph felled:
We now shall see him o'er the deep propelled,
In quest of knowledge, hid in learned lore;
To hold high converse with the works of Eld,
As from their gothic piles, with ages hoar,
The light of poetry may on his fancy pour

II.

Embarked on board a vessel bound for France,
He ventured on the sea, in spirits high,
To make his voyage as a child of chance.
Whilst the receding shores he still could spy,
He seemed as one in act to bid good-bye,
Not yet released from friendship's pressing hand;
But when the scene had closed to sea and sky,
He felt, amidst the waves without a strand,
As one who had departed from his native land.

III.

Soon as the stars appeared in heaven above,
He could again converse with kindred ties,
Again saw scenes by which to exchange his love.
For these, as Nature's all surveying eyes,
The spacious hemisphere at once comprise:
Look simultaneously on those below;
On maiden who at home prolongs her sighs,
And on her lover doomed the sea to go.
Blest hearts indeed which thoroughly their language know.

IV.

But thee, bright Hesperus, he chiefly eyed,
Since with a heart he left behind on land,
He had in mutual promises complied,
That thou, by both at the same hour scanned,
Shouldst join them in a manner hand to hand;
Shouldst call up feelings entertained before,
When they had language at their full command;
Shouldst features mutual to the mind restore,
Such as they seemed when all beloved they met on shore.

V.

But now a storm in all its wrath prevails:
With blackening clouds the sky is overcast;
The seamen with despatch furl up the sails;
The vessel, wafted by the furious blast,
Now hangs reclining on the inverted mast;
Now rolls into the yawning gulf beneath,
Whilst from the skies a billow threatens vast:
The passengers, with terror out of breath,
Prepare in various attitudes for instant death.

VI.

Eugene, thus threatened by a boisterous sea,
Gave all his future projects to the wind,
Regretted, that from curiosity,
He ever took the ocean's tour in mind;
He thought of all the friends he left behind,
But most of one, the nearest to his heart;
He dreaded too a watery grave to find,
A grave, which forms on worldly spot no part,
For memory to entomb, or friendship's tear to start.

VII.

These sad forebodings he perceived at last,
Were nothing but unnecessary fears.
The vessel gallantly rode out the blast,
E'en like a noble charger, when he bears,
Spite of the dreadful front which battle rears,
His lord unharmed through all the ranks of war.
Escaped the tumult on the watery spheres,
It gaily skimmed on ocean's bed afar,
With sails unfurled, and nothing more its speed to mar.

VIII.

He landed safely on the Gallic shore.
When now the vessel, with a goodly grace,
Approached the haven walled from billow's roar,
He could not but the storm in mind retrace,
Which it encountered on the ocean's space:
He caught in fancy at the checkered life,
Which man in his career is doomed to face;
Now all a scene of bustle and of strife,
Now sunshine, happiness, and an indulgent wife.

IX.

Eugene held in contempt the mode of life,
When he had scarce put foot on Gallia's soil.
The crowd of sycophants, in eager strife
To catch his eye with words as smooth as oil,
Though wholly bent on making him their spoil;
The gentry with mustachioed face severe;
The sun-burnt matrons (bent with heavy toil)
In wooden shoes, a misery to hear,—
These tended to make the inhabitants less dear.

X.

He staid at Havre, (so was called the port
At which he disembarked on Europe's coast,)
Till he had made to its *chef-d'œuvres* resort:
With him it had not much whereof to boast;
The streets in narrow intricacies lost;
The buildings void of ornament or show,
E'en incommodious, durable at most;
The public edifices, far to go,
With beauty crowned, but real magnificence below.

XI.

What gave it greatest interest in his eyes,
More than its site, distinguished by its name,*
Was that St. Pierre, in his Studies† wise,
Enrolled it in the register of fame:‡
'Twas this attached to it an extra claim,
Cleared up the streets in all their winding maze,

* Havre de Grace, a delightful harbour.

† His work entitled "Studies of Nature."

‡ St. Pierre was born at Havre de Grace.

Removed from awkward practices the shame,
Made it for sojourn a delightful place,
And lent the sceneries around a double grace.

XII.

Eugene to Rouen now pursued his way.
When he had of its spires a distant view,
He could not but reflect upon the day,
When Joan, charged with crimes of blackest hue,
(Which were in every feature proved untrue,)*
Was borne a helpless victim to her fate.
As all her character was strange and new,
I shall in brief her history relate,
Which cannot fail of interest at this distant date.

XIII.

Despite the rumour of her humble birth,†
She was the daughter, as was lately found,

* Not even the semblance of truth could be proved in the alleged charge of witchcraft of which Joan was condemned.

† It has been lately discovered that Joan of Arc, generally sup-

Of parents famed for their exalted worth.
The low condition to which she was ground,*
The effect of malice and the wars around,
Could not extinguish that heroic fire,
Which, with the love of freedom nobly crowned,
She had derived from her intrepid sire;
To the contending British a destruction dire.

XIV.

Called, as she fancied, by a heavenly voice,
To rescue from its foes her bleeding land,
She advertised her sovereign, without noise,
Of her commission by divine command.

posed to have been the daughter of an humble peasant, was in reality of royal descent. Her father, who was a distinguished nobleman in Italy, having unfortunately fallen in battle at a time when he had made no preparations for his family, could never disclose to the world the nobility of his daughter's birth; for it seems that he had her clandestinely conveyed to France, and consigned her to the care of humble peasants, without having given them the slightest intimation of her rank.

* She was employed as groom at a country Inn.

He, by the superstitious times unmanned,
Lent an indulgent ear to what she said,
Presented her, with weapons grasped in hand,
To all his troops as an inspired maid,
Sent by the God of arms to furnish them with aid.

XV.

A mission, thus announced as from above,
In times when superstition swayed the mind,
Could not but of the greatest moment prove.
The French it to the combat all inclined,
Convinced it was for their relief designed;
The British, threatened with its vengeful ire,
It to the languor of despair resigned.
The siege of Orleans was an instance dire,
Where Joan greatly signalised her martial fire.

XVI.

Being nobly mounted on her milk-white steed,
Which she would manage with peculiar grace,

She foremost dashed into the fight with speed,
And bore down all she met within her space.
Disdaining to give to a woman place,
And fired by the valour she displayed,
Her comrades rushed with furious might apace,
And all around a dreadful carnage made,
Whilst o'er their heads the consecrated banner* played.

XVII.

The British, failing to withstand the shock,
Began in every quarter to give way:
The French, with Joan as their sheltering rock,
Continued with redoubled wrath to slay,
And rendered still more fierce the bloody fray;
Nor did they into ranks retiring fall,
Till they had carried the contested day,
Displayed their colours on the conquered wall,
Relieved the city, and prepared for festive hall.

* Joan, on going forth to battle, had always carried before the army her banner, set off with such devices as were emblematic of her mission.

XVIII.

Thus destined in the ranks of war to shine,
There was no longer for conjecture place,
That Joan's mission was indeed divine.
A tide of victories, rolled far apace,
Swept towns on towns in one triumphant trace;
As when o'erswollen streams, the hills among,
Force a new channel for a wider space:
Woods, cattle, cities, in one deluged throng,
Are carried by the torrent far and wide along.

XIX.

Like faithful warrior, to his sovereign true,
Brave Joan did not from the field retire,
As long as hostile armies were in view.
But when her rescued country could respire
From all the ravages of arms and fire,
She, like a noble patriot of yore,
Expressed for a withdrawal her desire,
Though poverty, the same she braved before,
She knew awaited her all grimly at the door.

XX.

When with this wish, so humble yet sublime,
Her sovereign was not willing to comply,
Convinced it did not with his interest chime,
She passed her private inclinations by,
And showed her readiness in his cause to die;
More valiant than ambition's honour'd crew,
Who, darting on exalted rank their eye,
Have solely self-aggrandizement in view,
The object for which only they appear as true.

XXI.

She would her wonted bravery display,
Till at a sally, when with ardour fired,
She was at too great hazards drawn away.
Her own sworn officers her fall conspired:
Grown jealous of the laurels she acquired,
They left her with the enemy in the dust.*

* It is confidently asserted that her officers, jealous of the estimation in which she was held by her sovereign, abandoned her, when, her horse having fallen, she was in the midst of the enemy.

So Athens grew of Aristides tired,
When by his probity and faithful trust,
He had obtained the glorious epithet of "Just."

XXII.

Her captors, in the way of traffic old,*
But destitute of all exalted views,
Sold her to England for a sum of gold.
And did that country, conscious of her dues,
Make purchase of her to unloose her screws?
Her valour, though an enemy's, to reward,
Fit retribution when real merit sues?
Was it about that honour to regard,
Which even savages themselves will not discard?

XXIII.

Alas! far otherwise its coward aim.
To bind its helpless victim on the pyre,†

* Having fallen into the hands of the Burgundians, in heading a sally, Joan was sold by them to the English, for 10,000 livres.

† Joan was burned by the English at Rouen, charged with the crime of witchcraft.

And mock her woes, amidst the raging flame,
Ere in the shrieks of death she could expire,
Far more tormenting than the wasting fire,
For this it basely bartered gold away,
Of tyranny the ignominious hire;
For this it purchased her, whom in the fray,
It could not meet without the tremblings of dismay.

XXIV.

E'en so the ass, as in the fable told,
Avenged himself upon the lion sick:
Made by his dying state supremely bold,
He raised his clumsy heel to aim a kick,
And would meanwhile his long ears archly prick.
The monarch of the forest, deeply stung,
Did not the least at the contusions stick,
But felt the insult which the ass had flung:
'Twas this his royal breast with greatest torture wrung.

XXV.

Was Joan so corrupted by her fame,
That, like most characters for deeds renowned,

She knew religion only by its name?
 Indignantly on all devotion frowned,
 Which was not in her own encomium drowned?
 Died, and knew not there is a God on high,
 By whom the virtuous are with glory crowned,
 Whilst, doomed in endless misery to lie,
 The wicked are excluded from the upper sky?

XXVI.

What saint was more to adoration given,
 Than she when at her death to God she cried?
 Though by the clergy grudged the rights of heaven,
 She, to recall the death her Saviour died,
 A cross (held by a clown) intently eyed;*
 But when within the flames she stood inwalled,
 She raised her voice amidst the fiery tide,
 And, by the gaining torrent unappalled,
 With her expiring breath on her Redeemer called.

* When Joan was standing at the stake, encircled with the flames, she requested a clown to hold up two sticks in the form of a cross (for she was denied all the rites of religion.) Having her eyes fixed on this cross, she cried with her last breath to heaven for mercy.

XXVII.

May He have heard her voice—May He who said,
“Ask and you shall receive,” have had regard
To the petition of his injured maid—
May He who will in future times reward,
(As a requital for the sentence hard,)
The guiltless victim of tyrannic power,
Have pardoned her, as her bequeathed award,
Those sins she stooped to in an evil hour.
Who has not given the Fiend entrance to his bower?

XXVIII.

Corneille, the Shakspeare of the French confessed,
Made Rouen* still more famous with Eugene,
Urged him, when with no wordly thoughts oppressed,
To scrutinise alone the neighbouring scene,
The scattered hills with winding stream between,
That in his rambles lonely and retired,
He might be where the poet once had been,

* Rouen is famous as the birthplace of Corneille.

Admire the sceneries which he admired,
And be like him with all the charms of song inspired.

XXIX.

As eaglets, when they first attempt the sky,
Are in their voyage aiming at the sun,
As Liberty's broad beacon set on high,
Nor deem their altitude completely won,
Till they have all the other birds outdone,
E'en so Corneille for Lucan's spirit sped,
When his career of fame he first begun;
E'en so he deemed as having made no head,
Till he had wholly his competitors outfled.

XXX.

An independent spirit, all along,
Pervades his numbers in a copious vein,
And gives an elevation to his song.
Like to a steed, impatient of the rein,
But ever eager to devour the plain,

His muse o'erleaps the threshold at a bound,
And, helped by the impetuous start amain,
Sweeps with majestic grace the fairy ground,
To the delight of all spectators ranged around.

XXXI.

When now of Rouen he had ta'en adieu,
Eugene proceeded by a narrow way,
That, with high clamberings and turnings due,
He might at last to Caen succeed to stray,
A town in which he longed to pass a day;
Not that with vast extent and stately dome,
It rose in a magnificent array;
But as it had been Charlotte Corday's home,*
Known for her bold exploit, and her untimely tomb.

XXXII.

Despite the charms with which she was endowed—
A face, which rather like an angel's seemed,

* Caen was Charlotte Corday's place of residence.

Than a frail mortal's to destruction vowed—
A mind, whose purity of heaven beamed—
A heart, when with a kindred heart it streamed,
With love's unfeigned emotions all on glow—
Despite these rare perfections heavenly deemed,
She desperately aimed the assassin's blow,
And sent her victim reeling to the shades below.

XXXIII.

For it was not that patriotic zeal,
With which the breast of Brutus was inspired,
When he stabbed Cæsar for the public weal,
That Charlotte with a warrior's ardour fired:
Revenge was what she in her heart desired;*
A passion which true heroism flies;
And which, as far as her exploit it hired,
Reduced the boldness to a mean emprise,
Despite the public blessing to which it gave rise.

* The daring intrepidity displayed by Charlotte Corday in stabbing Marat, did not so much arise from a spirit of patriotism, as from a desire of taking vengeance for the death of her lover, who was guillotined by the instrumentality of Marat.

XXXIV.

Though Charlotte, from a loftiness of mind,
Had long withstood the shaft of Cupid's bow;
But when at last by his address made blind,
She was designed its full effects to know;
An officer, of pleasing outward show,
At length made an impression on her heart;
So deep did now this late sensation go,
That he was never from her thoughts apart:
She could no more from him, than from herself depart.

XXXV.

His manly beauty justified her love.
He was a youth, whose noble carriage drew
The eyes of all 'mongst whom he used to move.
His well-formed person, striking to the view;
His manners, seasoned with the graces due;
His bravery, conspicuous in his air,
And in the heat of action proved as true,—
These, joined to Honour's badge which he did wear,
Were strong temptations to entrap the fickle fair.

XXXVI.

When, sweetly locked in one another's arm,
They passed the hours from resort aside,
Who can imagine the delicious charm?
Made happy in their hearts by love allied,
They were forgetful of the world beside:
Wealth, honours, friends, which tempting prove,
Were in their ecstasy a thought denied;
And Nature's cravings, stifled by their love,
Slept all unthought of at some distant far remove.

XXXVII.

Yet were they never made in wedlock one.
Relentless fate did all their prospects blight.
So when two streams have long together run,
A mountain comes between with towering height,
And separates them far to left and right:
The trav'ler mourns the separation sore.
Marat the tyrant, urged by secret spite,
Gave Charlotte's lover to the hangman o'er,
To lop his head, and drown his beauteous form in gore.

XXXVIII.

So falls a goodly poplar straight and tall,
Which cottager has planted by his door.
He sees with joy its growth beside the wall,
As strength and verdure their perfections pour;
He strews beneath with seats the verdant floor,
To share the pleasure of its shade around;
But whilst he glories in its precious store,
A blast comes suddenly with furious sound,
And scatters all his fancied prospects on the ground.

XXXIX.

The grief of Charlotte cannot be conceived.
At first, she seem immersed in silent woe;
But when she found herself somewhat relieved,
She let the floodgates of her sorrow go;
Like clouds, which thick the welkin overflow,
And threaten to pour down a copious shower:
They first in drops their dark contents bestow,
As with overloaded weight they seem to lower;
But then at once in one continued torrent pour.

XL.

To grief succeeded all the storms of rage.
To slay the author of her lover's death,
Did now her thoughts exclusively engage:
She seemed to waste her life in idle breath,
Till she could in his breast her dagger sheathe.
The danger, consequent upon the blow,
She disregarded as her thoughts beneath:
To press the vengeance, kept her mind in glow;
The rest she let all to the winds unthought of go.

XLI.

She took for Paris post, full of her plot,
And hurried on her journey day and night,
To be the sooner on the wished-for spot.
Scarce could she from her vehicle alight,
But she made ready for the desperate fight:
Armed with a dagger, suited to her hand,
Though kept a secret from the obtrusive sight,
She gained admittance, by her loud demand,
Into the tyrant's room well for her purpose planned.

XLII.

Unconscious of ill-will, or harm designed,
He used no method to be on his guard.
Whilst, from the tenor of his bloody mind,
He took for victims' heads a strict regard,
She rose, as to his project to accord,
And plunged her dagger deep into his breast,
As for her lover's death a due reward.
His instant fall, which sent him to his rest,
Her hand's determined intrepidity confessed,

XLIII.

She made no efforts to fly from arrest,
As crowds in terror hurried to the door,
But the whole deed as her own act confessed.
With looks serene, and hands imbrued in gore,
She eyed the scene with satisfaction o'er:
As when with knife in hand, through slaughter red,
A butcher stands a bleeding beef before,
And waits collected till the beast has bled,
That he may lay it to his mind, and skin it dead.

XLIV.

With such a look, unconscious of all fear,
Stood Charlotte at the fallen tyrant's side;
So little did she fly from danger near,
When struggling in his agonies he died:
E'en when the officers their irons plyed,
She showed no disposition to oppose;
She was resigned her sentence to abide,
Since she had slain the author of her woes,
The point at which she was content her life to close.

XLV.

Throughout her trial, which ended in her guilt,
She showed a heroism unsurpassed:
The base tyrannic blood which she had spilt,
She knew, would not her reputation blast.
She held these sentiments e'en to the last,
"That crime, and not the scaffold makes the shame:"
With these in mind, when on the block bound fast,
She vindicated her unspotted name,
And looked to future ages for her meed of fame.

XLVI.

Eugene directed, without loss of time,
His course to Paris by the nearest route:
For he had read, when yet in early prime,
Of its magnificence displayed about.
Its streams of blood, by anarchy let out,
The expedition also importuned;
When distantly in sight of it without,
He, with his feelings to the time attuned,
In such soliloquy with his own heart communed.

XLVII.

“ Within these walls, enclosing but a span,
What crimes, as countless as the sand on shore,
Have been committed by that creature man!
Vesuvius, *Ætna*, when too full their store,
Will boil with the o’ertortured lava o’er,
And to their bowels transient rest bequeath;
But this receptacle of vice, the more
It does with its corrupted matter seethe,
The more it will look an irruption in the teeth.

XLVIII.

“ What virtue, deigned a reign on earth too brief,
Has fallen here to tyranny a prey!
Who can contemplate, without sighs of grief,
The massacre of St. Bartholomew’s day?
Who does not turn his face aghast away,
When, hanging on the lips of ripened age,
He sees the ‘Reign of Terror’ in its sway?
Whose blood boils not when he reads o’er the page
Of the Burgundian League, and Isabella’s rage?”

XLIX.

Eugene, when he had now the city gained,
Resolved to visit, at an early time,
The public edifices it contained,
So much extolled in transatlantic clime.
That his research might with devotion chime,
He first to Notre Dame pursued his way:
That building, with antiquity sublime,
Drew forth, as he indulged in a survey,
The following sentiments thus artless brought to day.

L.

“ One thousand years ere Washington was born,*
These walls, as I behold them now, were piled—
They had been by the wrecks of ages worn,
When yet Columbus was a suckling child,
And fair America an unknown wild:
Ye who would know the grandeur of this fane,
Go view her blest with independence mild:
Survey her commerce, carried o'er the main
As far as rival nations intercourse maintain:

LI.

“ Behold her cities, smiling on the coast,
Like the creations of some fairy's hand,
The abodes of wealth, and fashion's proudest boast:
Explore the state of her interior land,
Her towns, as flourishing they scattered stand,
Amidst the scenes of cultivation gay:

* The ancient church Notre Dame, in the city of Paris, was built early in the 8th century.

Investigate her constitution, planned
By wisdom's counsels in the simplest way,
Combining of good government each nation's ray.

LII.

“ Such only can in their own bosoms feel
The sentiments which I would here express.
Traced by the progress Europe's works reveal,
This edifice will strike the mind the less.
What is the city which the Czars possess?
What is proud Venice, with its marble wall?
Considered in the sunshine of success,
They are all nothing, epochs to recall,
When with America compared which shames them all.

LIII.

“ When Henry was in this Cathedral crowned,*
What crowds of people, gathered far and wide,

* Henry the Sixth was crowned king of England in Notre Dame, in the year 1422.

And for their wealth and rank alike renowned,
Have witnessed the imposing scene betide.
Here were the greatest men that France supplied,
And in that age of fame she had her share;
Here, honoured by distinguished Powers allied,
The crown received a more important air;
Here pressing and oppressed the crowd were seen to
stare.

LIV.

“The ladies here were seated in a row,
More dazzling than the jewels which they wore.
Ah! how their cheeks did like the roses glow.
Their features, formed on beauty’s happiest score,
Expressed the love they in their bosoms bore;
Their hair, in many a ringlet twirled around,
Hung down their shoulders in luxuriant store;
Their hands, of delicate proportion found,
Were with a more than snowy whiteness richly crowned.

LV.

“Full twice two hundred years have passed away,
Since this assemblage, congregated so,
Shone by its lustre, and obscured the day.
Where now the members that made up the show?
The monarch, whom with adulations low
All honoured in his Majesty serene?
The nobles, with their wealth’s unemptied flow,
Their pride of lineage, and their spirits keen?
The ladies, who with native charms adorned the scene?”

LVI.

“Gone, where armorials no rank bestow,
Committed to the earth, the common bed,
Where all without distinction are laid low.
Another generation came ahead,
Which for its day its gaudy plumage spread,
Then sunk into the earth the grave to fill;
Another, and another swelled the dead;
Each, like its predecessor, strove up hill,
Till unexpected death did all its prospects spill.”

LVII.

“Did nature miss them passing thus away?
The sun, as loath for grief from bed to rise,
Was he less careful to bring back the day?
Drooped in the night the stars with weeping eyes?
Endured the seasons, as in mourning guise,
A change unsanctioned by the rolling year?
Appeared the streams, as taken with surprise
In the smooth current of their gay career?
Appeared they to the eye less beautiful, less clear?”

LVIII.

“No more than at the falling of the leaves,
Which, when in autumn they have dropped away,
The coming spring with a new set retrieves.
Whence then, O man, thy towering pride, O say?
What cause for such magnificent display?
Thyself, all Nature, Revelation, show,
That thou art but a creature of a day,
Doomed to descend into the earth below,
As all the works of clay must one time crumbling go.”

1874

The first thing I did was to go to the
 office and see what was going on.
 I found everything in a state of
 confusion. The books were all
 mixed up and I had to go through
 them one by one. I found that
 the accounts were all wrong and
 I had to go to the bank and
 see what was going on there.
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